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New York

1934

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**AN**

**AMERICAN BOY**

**IN**

**THE SOVIET UNION**

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**BY HARRY EISMAN**

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# AN American Boy IN THE Soviet Union

By  
HARRY EISMAN

1934  
YOUTH PUBLISHERS  
New York

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## FOREWORD

MY American childhood was molded in the revolutionary movement. Joining the Pioneers in 1924, I have been steeped in the class struggle from the age of eleven. In 1926 I helped in the Passaic strike and I have marched on the picket lines with cloakmakers and furriers, cafeteria employees and fruit clerks in New York. I took part in nearly every workers' demonstration; I spoke often from the platform in the name of the Young Pioneers.

These activities earned me the hatred of the capitalists and their servants in the public school system of New York. I was arrested seven times in strikes and demonstrations and suspended from school.

On July 20, 1929, the Pioneers organized a "send-off" demonstration for boy scouts who were leaving for their international jamboree in England. The demonstration was planned as a children's protest against government war preparations (for the boy scouts are primarily a training school for militarism) and against the danger of war against the Soviet Union. The police attacked the demonstration and four of us were arrested. Although the charge against me was admittedly flimsy, because of my record in children's courts of New York, it was decided that I badly needed "correction."

I was sent to the Hawthorne School, a reformatory for juvenile delinquents. After six months I was paroled.

In sequel to the events of the March 6, 1930, unemployed demonstration, when William Z. Foster, Robert Minor,

Israel Amter and Harry Raymond were arrested, I was returned to Hawthorne for breach of parole and given a five and one-half-year term.

Workers' protest against my imprisonment spread over the world. In the Soviet Union there wasn't a school child that didn't hear about it. In Germany, England, Scotland, Sweden, Czechoslovakia, labor organizations conducted protest campaigns against my imprisonment; in the U.S.A., in almost every industrial city, demonstrations were held for my release. Widespread protest made reform school officials uneasy. In the school I insisted I was a political prisoner and should be treated as one. The school officials were thinking only of the best way to get rid of me. I carried on Red propaganda even in the jail. In June, 1930, I was elected by the Young Pioneers to go to their Second World Congress in Berlin. I applied to the officials to allow me to go to Germany. Within a month or so I received an official reply that if I wanted to go to the Soviet Union I could, on condition that I didn't return to the States within two years. I told this to my comrades and just about this time (September) an invitation came from the Pioneers of the Soviet Union asking me to come to live, work and study in the U.S.S.R. I agreed to leave the U.S.A. for the time being because it would do no one any good if I stayed in jail for five years. Thus, on November 15, 1930, I was freed from the reform school and five days later I sailed on the *S. S. New York* for Germany.

This explains how I came to the Soviet Union.

—HARRY EISMAN.

## AN AMERICAN BOY IN THE SOVIET UNION

### PART I.

#### A SOVIET WELCOME

“**H**OW much longer to Soviet waters?” I kept asking as our boat steamed down the Gulf of Finland. I stared ahead, pacing the deck, hoping to be first on board to sight the land of the hammer and sickle. Suddenly a shadow of land appeared on the horizon! But it was only the shores of Finland. The afternoon wore on, I could scarcely stand the strain of waiting. Then, at last they hoisted the Red flag on the German ship! Wildly excited, I shouted revolutionary songs into the wind, while we neared the land. At Kronstadt the G.P.U. frontier guards came on board to examine our papers.

The presence of those guards was thrilling. Embodying the Soviet power, they added substance to my dream. One of them knew a smattering of English, German and Jewish. Since I also know these languages more or less, we were able to converse, and my talk with that first representative of Soviet Power was the topic of my letter to my friends in America.

As we entered the Port of Leningrad, Red flags were flying in the cold December dusk.

The telegram announcing my departure from Berlin had gone astray, so no one was on hand to meet me at the pier. This was something of a jolt; how was I to reach Moscow with only fourteen rubles in my pocket? I told my troubles to the G.P.U. guards, who turned me over to the Intourist

representative. I was taken by taxi to the Hotel Europe where I repeated my story. "Have you anything on you to prove what you say?" an official inquired. At first I said "no." Then I remembered that on my last day in New York I had been given a letter from the editors of the *Leninskaya Iskra*, inquiring about me and asking how they might help me reach the Soviet Union. I produced the letter and Intourist phoned the paper. The comrades of the staff were quite amazed to hear of my arrival, for that day their paper carried a front-page story on my release from jail and the news of my departure. They said they'd be right over; meanwhile they told Intourist to get me a room and something to eat right away.

The luxurious hotel and expensive food made me feel a little embarrassed. Then representatives of the editorial staff of the *Leninskaya Iskra* arrived; the knowledge that I was among friends put me at ease and I ate well.

Opposite the Hotel Europe is the Leningrad Philharmonic. The night of my arrival a special concert was to be held for the Young Pioneers of Leningrad and 2,000 of them, wearing red bandannas around their necks, packed the hall. My arrival was announced from the stage and the Pioneers burst into cheers. I spoke for a few minutes and then retired to one of the boxes, expecting to listen to the concert. But the Pioneers crowded around me, full of questions which I couldn't answer—for I didn't know Russian and the translator told them to hold their curiosity till after the concert.

At the end the Pioneers surged over to me. So I mounted the stage and answered questions for nearly an hour.

I spent four days in Leningrad and visited many plants and factories, including the famous Electrosila and Karl Marx plants. Here I first saw the energy and enthusiasm of the workers, the driving force of socialist construction, and

here I first learned the phrase "Five-Year Plan in Four Years!" and other watchwords of the great offensive.

The sight of the Russian workers, young and old, cheerful and healthy looking, simply but warmly clad, was living proof that the capitalist press, with its tales of cold and want, deals in lies and slander against the Soviet Union.

The night of my departure from Leningrad, December 12, 1930, a conference was held in the Leningrad Children's House of Culture. The main hall was packed, the staircases and entrances overflowed with children. Three times I spoke, in different parts of the house. Out in the street they crowded the sidewalks, wherever I turned they swarmed around me, eager to greet the Pioneer from America. Finally, I was whisked away in a *droshka*. To escape the children who trooped after us the driver was forced to turn into a street where horse-drawn vehicles are not allowed.

I had a swell trip from Leningrad to Moscow. The landscape was white with snow. As the train pulled into the October Station in Moscow the platform was lined with Pioneers, with their banners, drums and bugles. When I stepped down from the train they broke ranks and came running towards me, shouting their welcome.

Then and there my big German trunk served as speaker's stand for an impromptu mass meeting. Smirnov, then head of the International Children's Bureau of the Young Communist International, was the first speaker. He greeted the Young Pioneers of America and spoke of their successful fight for my freedom. He called on the children to tighten the bonds of international working class solidarity. I got up next, and for several minutes they cheered and sang. In my speech I pledged that while in the Soviet Union I would never forget the heroic struggles of the American workers and the American Pioneers and promised to do my utmost



to equip myself for a place on the revolutionary battlefield.

On those young and eager faces I saw many nationalities—Russian, Jewish, Eastern. Here I read the meaning of international solidarity. White chauvinism, anti-Semitism, race prejudice in any form, are known to these children only through hearsay and through the stories of the Scottsboro case, the Georgia chain-gangs and American lynchings reported in their papers. These stories fill them with hatred for the oppressors of their class brothers in other lands. These boys and girls are the future builders of Communism.

#### THE FIRST PIONEER COMMUNE

After the demonstration at the station I was taken to the First Pioneer Commune in Moscow, where I was to live. A huge, dim hall in an old building, children in dark clothes, a gray-haired woman stood in the center of a group at the head of the stairs awaiting the new arrival. My impression for the moment was one of regulations and discipline and it gave me a slight qualm, for still fresh in my mind was the dread memory of the Hawthorne Reform School back in America, and the least suggestion of matrons in uniforms unnerved me. A children's home under capitalism is always something of a jail. But the First Pioneer Commune proved altogether different from anything in America.

In capitalist countries, a children's home attempts to prepare its little victims to be submissive slaves, stunting their minds with racial and religious prejudices, keeping them ignorant and uncultured. Children's homes in the Soviet Union take former homeless waifs and train them to be free, educated members of the workers' state. In capitalist countries the children are taught a narrow patriotism. In the Soviet Union they learn the spirit of proletarian internationalism.

In capitalist children's homes the discipline is imposed on them by the matrons. The children obey against their will, only through fear of punishment. This system breeds a spirit of antagonism to all forms of discipline and starts many children on the road to becoming thieves and criminals.

In the Pioneer Commune the discipline is administered by children who realize themselves the need for it. There are only four adults working in the Commune: the head of the managing department, the technical secretary, the Pioneer leader and the cook, "Auntie Jean," who is the most popular person in the Commune. Here one can see self-government in action, for the Pioneers have their own governing bodies. They have their Soviet, their troop, which is divided into four links, and their own social and cultural organizations. Through this self-government the children become self-reliant and acquire political experience.

The history of the Commune has been one of struggle for growth and success. The Commune was founded on the initiative of a group of Young Pioneers in 1924. The first year was very hard. There were no beds or mattresses and only a small stock of linen, clothing and food. That first year was truly a Pioneer year. Only youthful energy and enthusiasm pulled them through. "There are no strongholds that Bolsheviks cannot capture." Stalin's words were proved by these children who founded the first self-governing Pioneers' Commune.

Stories of Commune members who have since joined the Communist Party show how the Commune is building leaders of the future.

#### SOME COMMUNE MEMBERS

At the time of my arrival the leader of the Commune was Yasha Lokshin. He had just finished the pedagogical

technicum and was a member of the Comsomol (Young Communist League). Under his leadership the Commune strengthened its unity, discipline and spirit. In 1932 Yasha left the Commune to join the Red Army. Here Yasha again showed his capabilities as a leader and today he is a young Red commander.

When Sagi joined the Commune six years ago the Pioneers gave him his name. Sagi had been smuggled into the Soviet Union after his parents had been murdered by the white terror in Korea when he was very small, too small in fact to remember either them or the name they gave him. Sagi is very talented. During the four years he was at the Commune he was one of its most popular members. With the help of his comrades he used to construct models of airplanes and airships. Now he is attending the aviation trade school and soon he will be graduated.

The Polish terror imprisoned Mati Baechinski's father and mother. Her father is a miner from the Dombrowsky coal district in Poland.

In 1928, the miners elected him to the *Sejm*, the Polish parliament. Despite the legal immunity to which members of the *Sejm* are supposed to be entitled, Mati's father was arrested and so was her mother.

Mati was smuggled out of Poland together with her little sister by our Polish comrades. She lived for a short time in France and was then brought to the U.S.S.R. Both her parents are now here, her father having come direct from prison.

Mati is an energetic girl, full of life and initiative, fifteen and a half years old. It didn't take her long to learn Russian—Polish is close to Russian. When, for long periods, she received no news from home she used to cry bitterly, not because she was a coward, she used to say, but because,

"I'm old enough to fight in the struggle. My place is there, where the struggle is. It isn't fair that we should be here protected while scores of our comrades are in capitalist prisons."

The struggle was always on her mind. In the Commune the children helped her to find her place and before long Mati realized that here, too, there was struggle. Struggle for the construction of a classless socialist society, for the mastery of technique, for socialist culture. To Mati this struggle meant learning Russian, striving for higher marks in school, for a clean and disciplined life in the Commune. Mati has held nearly every "office" in the Pioneer movement. During the last year or so she was the most active Pioneer in the Commune. She was one of the best students in school and became a Comsomolka, being secretary of her Comsomol nucleus until her graduation from school in June.

Today Mati wants to learn more about politics so she may go back to Poland, reinforced with the revolutionary ammunition of Marx, Lenin and Stalin to fight the Polish fascists.

#### COMMUNIST TRAINING

Under Soviet training the children aren't cut off from the "outside" world as many imagine. On the contrary, they are brought into close contact with the masses. In the factory which has patronage over the Commune, the children carry on social work, helping to abolish illiteracy, staging plays and tableaux dealing with factory life. These little plays will help raise the standards of the workers by exposing idlers, drunkards and absentees, and calling for mastery of technique and better discipline.

In the schools the Pioneers do remarkably well. In April, the First Pioneer Commune had an average rating of

99.7 per cent fulfillment of their study tasks. The 0.3 per cent underfulfillment is explained by the arrival in the Commune of Dick, an American youngster who knew only a few words of Russian and could not understand anything the teacher said. Today, however, after six or seven months in the Commune, he speaks Russian fairly well.

The work of the Commune is done by the new shock work method of socialist competition. If you want a lesson in real socialist competition, from the signing of the contract to the checking up of results, take a trip to the Commune. There you will see with what enthusiasm the children fulfill their socialist competition contracts, be it with the workers in the Hammer and Sickle plant, or the workers' restaurant in the plant, with other children's homes or schools, between troops and links within the Commune or among themselves. The socialist agreements are drawn up according to clearly defined rules. Each agreement must help the Commune, the Pioneer organization and every individual communard to develop himself as a Communist who is active in the building of socialism.

In this atmosphere of socialist competition and friendship I felt in my own life the complete difference between the outlook here and the outlook in capitalist America.

Let me quote what some people have said about the First Pioneer Commune. Here is what Rabindranath Tagore, celebrated Indian poet, had to say:

"I shall always remember the delightful evening that I spent with these Pioneers. I have learnt many things which will be of great use for our own people in India, for which I am grateful to them. My heart goes out to these young builders of their nation's destiny and I wish them success."

The late J. Louis Engdahl, once general secretary of the

International Labor Defense in the U.S.A., who was an honorary Pioneer and Communard of the Commune, wrote:

"Such revolutionary enthusiasm as I found in the First Pioneer Commune cannot help but communicate itself to new ranks of children in the revolutionary struggles of the working class the world over. I pledge myself to do my utmost to help my comrades here in their task to help build and strengthen the international solidarity of the world's working class.

"We can all do this only by ceaseless effort that knows no defeat and overcomes every obstacle. I feel that such a conquering spirit lives and grows in the First Pioneer Commune."

There is much more testimony to the same effect but I think this will suffice to show what a deep impression the Soviet way of training the youth has made on foreign visitors. Communes like the one I have tried to picture exist all over the Soviet Union, and a visit to any one of them will refute capitalist arguments that Soviet training makes the child one-sided, that the Soviet child is meek, always serious and generally a young "old man".

The Pioneer camp opened my eyes to the realities of the new way of life. We were one great family, helping one another and pushing forward from early morning till bed-time, from day to day, week to week, year to year.

When I entered the Commune I couldn't speak any Russian. The children would sit down and teach me. When I made a mistake they would burst into gay laughter and correct me. They would never let me go until I pronounced a word correctly. I'll always be indebted to them for the pains they took in helping me to learn the ropes in my new environment.

## KHARKOV AND THE G.P.U. COMMUNE

Some weeks after my arrival in Moscow, I started on a tour of the Soviet Union, to tell the Pioneers everywhere of the struggles of our American Pioneers and to bring them the pledge of international solidarity.

The route was first to Kharkov in the Ukraine. Never having seen a Ukrainian, I carried all kinds of fantastic pictures in my mind. I imagined every Ukrainian with a sword, or at any rate a whip in his hand, dressed in black, with top boots and sporting a fierce mustache. My imaginary Ukrainian was probably suggested by articles in the American press and by stories of pogroms and massacres during the time of the Tsar and the white guard bandits. This conception was quite unlike the real thing—peaceful peasants, the workers of Dnepropetrovsk, or the miners of the Don Basin.

We drove by sleigh from the station to the Kharkov Grand Opera House, where the Ukrainian Young Communists were holding their Eighth Congress. And here I learned of the real Ukraine, of Soviet Ukraine with its tractors, power plants and steel mills, of the great Dneprostroy Dam and of other triumphs of socialist construction.

I spent several days in Kharkov and every single minute was taken up with something. I spoke from four to five times a day and visited many factories. One day I was driven to Tractorstroy, then under construction. At the time it seemed unbelievable that one day it would live up to its scheduled output of one hundred tractors a day, yet sure enough it did and I recently read in *Pravda* that one hundred and thirty-seven tractors per day were being turned out. While in Kharkov I also visited the Felix Dzerzhinsky G.P.U. Commune.

This Commune was founded in 1927, in honor of the tenth anniversary of the G.P.U. and of that great *Chekist*

(The G.P.U. was formerly called the *Cheka*, which means, Extraordinary Commission), Felix Dzerzhinsky. Dzerzhinsky was foremost among those who tried to solve the problem of the thousands of homeless waifs and juvenile delinquents—a legacy of the civil war and famine. He conceived the idea of establishing labor communes for the waifs under G.P.U. supervision.

In 1927 the "collectors" got busy gathering "residents" for a new home to be opened on the outskirts of Kharkov. These "residents" were found in the freight trains, railroad yards and stations, on the streets and garbage dumps. The house in which the new institution was begun was small and had only a small shop for the kids to work in. At the outset there were only fifty children, boys and girls.

The Commune grew by leaps and bounds. Now it is located in a huge two-story building, with a large electric drill factory and four hundred and thirty-two "inmates".

Upon graduating from the Commune the children are qualified workers with an education equal to that of high school in America. The Commune, like every other Soviet body, has its Party, Comsomol and Pioneer groups, its trade union and auxiliary organizations. The Communards receive regular trade union wages for their labor in their drill factory. The wages average as high as 150 rubles a month for a four-hour day. Out of their wages they pay thirty-five rubles for their maintenance and fifteen per cent of their wages for cultural activities. The rest of the money they put into the savings bank on their personal account. This money they may take out when they graduate. Meantime they are allowed thirty-five rubles pocket money.

The Commune factory plays a considerable role in the electrical industry of the U.S.S.R. The Soviet Union requires annually 12,000 electric hand drills, for which it used

to pay foreign capitalists a million gold rubles. The Commune, the first in the Union, was producing in 1933 7,000 of these drills annually, expecting to increase its output sufficiently to make the U.S.S.R. altogether independent of foreign imports. A new factory to make cameras like the German "Leika" is being constructed on the grounds of the Commune.

The Commune runs a farm, with 840 rabbits, 51 pigs and 16 horses, as well as many acres of vegetables.

It has its own laundry and its own tailor shops, where the Communards make their clothes.

The Commune is self-governed, and the Communards obviously have no feeling of being locked in. When I left one building to go into another the children followed me. In surprise (I forgot for the moment that I was in a Soviet institution and still had the New York S.P.C.C. and "Hawthorne School" in my mind), I asked: "Are you allowed to leave the building? Won't you get into trouble?" They laughed; it was a good joke to them. A young Communard explained: "What do you think this place is anyway? You seem to think our Commune is a place where the unfortunate are locked in. We have all the freedom we want. But we also have our discipline. When we want to go to the city, we get permission from our commander."

The Commune has an orchestra of fifty-five pieces and organizes concerts; it has a photo circle, a technical circle, a radio circle, circles for the discussion of current events and various political classes. The Commune has a large meeting hall and its own movies. Very soon it will have "talkies". This Commune is, in fact, a miniature city.

Its life and routine are very interesting. Here the children not only receive an academic, technical and political education, but are being brought up in the spirit of true

comradeship. Yesterday these children didn't know one another, would fight among themselves for a crust of bread, were dirty, uncared-for, uncultured and a "pitiful sight". Today they are model citizens of a small, self-contained workers' and farmers' republic, learning, advancing and finding life well worth while. Tomorrow they'll be among our best engineers, our social leaders and fellow builders of Communist society.

For years after the overthrow of the Tsar the Ukraine remained in a state of civil war. The Ukraine had its white guards, its bandit Batka Machno, its robber gangs of "Greens", its terrorist, Jew-baiting Petlura. With the help of foreign capital these scoundrels fought the Soviets till 1922, when the Red Army finally crushed them. During this period the hardest hit by the white terror were the revolutionary workers and peasants. There was an orgy of national hatred and anti-Semitism. To be known as a Jew at that period was to be strung up on a tree, to be shot and mutilated. While I was among the happy Jewish children in the Voroshilov Jewish Children's Home, many of whom lost their parents during those years of strife, I could not help thinking of those dark days.

In this home, as in the Pioneer and the Dzerzhinsky Communes, there is the same method of training, the same kind of organizations, school, socialist competition and so on.

#### DOWN THE COAL PIT

Gorlovka, my next stop, is a typical mining town. Whatever you touch bears some relation to coal, and to keep yourself clean is really a problem. I know it was for me. On my first day in Gorlovka I visited a machine factory that prepares all kinds of electrical, automatic and hand instruments for use in the mines. After visiting the shops and factory

school a meeting was organized where I spoke to the workers. I told them of the present crisis in the capitalist world, about the conditions of the working class in America and of the growth of the revolutionary movement there.

For over an hour the workers asked questions. There wasn't a thing—from the women's question to the Pioneers, what Al Smith was doing, whether Foster was free—that didn't interest them.

Next day was exciting—I went down a mine. The three of us—the guide, the interpreter and myself—got into special clothing and received a lamp each before we descended into the shaft. Crawling from one part of the mine into another, we talked with the miners at work. One of them, a Chinese, showed us the gold watch he had received as a prize for being the best shock-worker in his mine. Soviet miners are provided with the latest electrical equipment to lighten their heavy work, and every precaution is taken to ensure their safety.

They work only five or six hours a day, are supplied with free medical care, free working clothes, free baths and milk.

When we came up we were led into a bath. There was plenty of hot water and soap and it was good to get all that black off.

In Dniepropetrovsk, my next stop, I visited many schools, Pioneer gatherings and the International Work Conferences. I also visited the Petrovsky-Lenin Metallurgical Plant, the Palace of Culture and an Artillery Regiment.

In the metallurgical plant I saw the production of steel and pig iron. I also saw how people were being remade into conscious builders of socialism. Everywhere one encountered socialist competition and shock brigades, workers competing with one another, challenging other brigades, challenging their foremen to socialist competition. You couldn't get away

from this new method of socialist labor; wherever you turned or went, there it was, filling the workers with enthusiasm.

On my visit to the Red Army I was presented by the regiment with a Red Army uniform of which I am very proud.

After a day and a night by train we reached Teraspul, Moldavia. There was a fearful snowstorm. I was met at the station by a Pioneer delegation and Satsmari, a Hungarian political emigrant and a leading member of the Soviet government of Moldavia.

One of the first things I did in Teraspul was to visit the Soviet-Rumanian border. The Dniester River was frozen and anyone could have walked across to the opposite bank. But that is no longer in our hands. Rumanian capitalists with the help of French imperialism and Polish intervention, were able to occupy Red Bessarabia and impose on it a rule of terror. Standing on the Soviet side I saw on the opposite shore a Rumanian soldier with a bayonet that glistened in the sun.

To me the plight of Bessarabia is a personal affliction. For Bessarabia was my birthplace. My parents are buried in the Kishinev Jewish cemetery. I have many relatives struggling for a living under the iron heel of Rumanian white terror. Yes, and as I stood on that border all my thoughts went back to my early childhood, to the vague picture that remained in my mind—the Kishinev pogroms and the marching of troops. That's all I could remember. I wanted to go back to Kishinev to find my relations and tell them of the new motherland I had found and where I was so happy. But there was that soldier with the shining bayonet on the other side.

The four days that I lived in Teraspul were the most instructive of my whole trip. I remembered how once in Hawthorne a guard came over and pointed out to me in the

*Sun*, a New York capitalist newspaper, a story relating to supposed happenings in Tiraspol. According to the author of the story there were dozens of people escaping every day from Soviet atrocities, hunger, terror, deprivation and so forth, seeking a safe refuge across the river.

"Now you see what a wonderful land your Soviet Russia is!" the guard said, trying to show me how one-sided I was and that I hadn't any idea of what was really happening in the land of the Bolsheviks.

I didn't pay much attention to that story then. But now that I was on the spot where all those tragedies were supposed to have occurred only a few months back and where similar tragedies were supposedly still taking place, I decided to do some checking up.

Well, what did I find? The story of the refugees that were supposed to have been escaping from Tiraspol proved to be just the other way 'round. "You see that detention house over on that corner?" said one of my guides, a young Comsomol. "Well, in there people who sneak into our territory from Rumania are detained for questioning. That place is full of Bessarabian peasants who daily risk their lives in order to get across here to our side of the border."

I had an interview with President Voronovich of the Autonomous Moldavian Soviet Republic.

He told me his life story, the typical story of a Moldavian peasant boy. From early childhood he went to work. He worked for a priest who paid him next to no wages. Before the war he got a job in a canning factory where he worked until he joined the Kotovsky partisan troops which were the foremost fighters for Soviet Moldavia. After the revolution, he continued to be very active among his fellow workers. He was eventually elected to the Soviet and in 1918 was made People's Commissar of Agriculture. In 1926 he became

president of the Central Executive Committee of the Republic. He's undoubtedly the most popular person in Moldavia.

He told me of the happy Moldavian population living here under the Soviets, of the hundreds of tractors that were on the fields, of Soviet Moldavian collective farms, of the 1,200 educational institutions, of the rise in the social and cultural conditions of Moldavian people.

I asked him if many of the Soviet population run across the border. He laughed and pointed out to me the difference between the Soviet fields and the bare, cold fields on the Rumanian side. "Walk along the border and you'll see for yourself. On our land we have tractors and combines working; across the border you see the fields bare and unharvested. There they are hungry. It hurts us to see how our brothers are suffering. . . . Well, come on, my young comrade, the Red Army is waiting for us." We climbed into a waiting Ford and drove to the Red Army base. It was a fine sight to see all the Red Army men standing at attention in their long winter overcoats. When they saw Voronovich they roared a welcome.

A meeting followed at which Voronovich, a Red Army man and I spoke. At the close I was made an honorary member of their division and tossed three times into the air. Then I took pictures of the Red Commanders of the Division, including Voronovich.

Afterwards we went to the G.P.U. border guard base. We visited their barracks, Red corners, and dormitories. One of the walls of the Red corners dealt with the capture of Rumanian bands who had tried to get into Soviet territory, and of big kulak bands who were allied with Rumanian interventionists and who were plotting against the Soviets.

## MEMORIES OF THE POTEMKIN

From Teraspul I went to Odessa. The town seemed very familiar to me. Hadn't I seen the film *Potemkin* three or four times in New York? And there were those memorable steps by the sea. I lived right across from those steps and looked out of the window in my room. I thought of the heroic struggle of the *Potemkin*, on the very water that was before us.

We left Odessa and went by Soviet steamer through the Black Sea to the North Caucasus, travelling down the beautiful Crimean coast, with a stop at Yalta where it was warm and people were going about in their jackets and shirts. The next day we reached Novorossisk where the streets were still covered with ice; then on the Rostov for a look at Selmashstroy, the great farm-implement plant, on my way to Stalingrad.

## STALINGRAD

My impressions of Stalingrad I'll never forget. Here the old and new ways of life stood out in sharp contrast; trucks and automobiles side by side with wagons drawn by oxen and camels. On the one hand, a new socialist city with all modern conveniences and, on the other, old thatch-roofed dwellings with pigs, chickens and cows wandering around the house.

I attended a collectivization conference of collective farm workers of Lower Volga. Many of the peasants, probably former Cossacks, were dressed in national garb. All of them spoke on one subject—the spring sowing.

They all agreed that conditions were favorable for a good sowing and voiced their resolve to drive the class enemy, the kulak, the shirker, out of the collective and off the fields. All were resolved to work together for their

common goal. "Lower Volga must be in the forefront in the coming sowing." This was the battle cry adopted by the conference.

At the tractor plant I saw many foreign workers with whom I spent several days. Most of the workers and specialists were honest people who came here to help make the Soviet Union into a land of many tractors, automobiles and combines. These earnest workers have done their best to help put this newly born industrial giant, the first of its kind in the U.S.S.R., to work and make it produce a high quality of tractors. There were other foreigners, however, who came here not to help, but to make lots of undeserved money, and to snicker at the inexperienced Russian workers recently recruited from the villages. Those foreigners, instead of helping to organize circles to overcome technical illiteracy, went out night after night on drinking bouts. Then they complained loudly of the Russian hardships. Because of these people our tractor plant wasn't running normally until the middle of 1931. But when the Soviet government cleaned out the loafers, with the help of earnest foreigners like Honey, (who was decorated by the Soviet government with the order of Lenin), things began to move.

I visited the English-speaking school for the children of foreigners. In the school they had a teacher from Detroit who used American textbooks and taught the children that the Boy and Girl Scouts are wonderful organizations. Nationalism and poison were being pumped into the heads of the foreign children here in the Soviet Union. Now this school was built and supported by Soviet workers' money and yet there they were training enemies of all the Soviet Union stood for.

When I started to denounce the Boy Scout organization as anti-working class and counter-revolutionary, the teacher



burst out: "You lie and you know it. I have a son who is a Boy Scout and he has nothing against your people. Here in the room are several Boy and Girl Scouts from America. You can ask them if they are being prepared for war!" The teacher spoke so angrily she perspired and at the end of her outburst called upon the children to rebuke me.

From my experiences in the Pioneer movement in New York I was familiar with such arguments and I took them as a matter of course. I answered the slanders of the teacher quietly and persuaded many children to join the Pioneer group that was to be formed.

Before I left Stalingrad I was assured that school would be closed until a new teacher was found. Later another teacher was appointed and the school was reorganized.

In Stalingrad I fell ill and we decided to return to Moscow, although the tour was only half completed. The sudden change in my way of life after I had lived for nearly a year and a half under a strict jail regime was too much for me. I was tired out. My head ached and when I tried to write or even think I felt as if my brain was just about to burst.

I was sent for a month and a half to a sanatorium where I gained several pounds in weight. It was a fine place, with plenty of skiing and skating and two hours of school. At this time I went for my Russian lessons. From 5 to 6:45 the children were in the village carrying on cultural work among the peasants. In the evening we had all kinds of concerts, indoor camp fires, movies, and amusements. The director of the camp sanatorium, Comrade Chervonsky, was also its chief doctor. He was a good fellow and spoke English very well. He undertook to teach me Russian and made a good job of it.

From the sanatorium I was sent to Leningrad for the May Day holidays. Before I left Moscow I received a bundle of

*Daily Workers* from New York and from these I learned the first news of the Scottsboro case. I resolved to try to do something to help those innocent boys.

On May 2, in the huge hall of the Leningrad Philharmonic there assembled a large all-city Pioneer gathering to celebrate May Day and the opening of the eleventh International Children's Week. There I spoke and my main point was the Scottsboro Case. Here the Leningrad Pioneers first heard of this now world famous case. And they came to the assistance of their class brothers just as the Leningrad workers had come to the defense of Tom Mooney in 1917. The meeting adopted a fiery resolution condemning the contemplated legal lynching of the Negro youths. The resolution was sent to J. Louis Engdahl, then General Secretary of the International Labor Defense, and was published in the Leningrad *Iskra*.

#### A VISIT TO MAXIM GORKY

In June I went with a Pioneer delegation to invite Maxim Gorky to an evening in the Commune. He greeted us in a very comradely and friendly manner. While shaking hands he suddenly remembered that Pioneers aren't supposed to shake hands but to give the Pioneer salute. So he stopped shaking hands to give the salute (we had saluted when we entered but he had forgotten to); then with a broad smile he continued his hand-shaking.

Among the things he discussed with us, after noticing our thick brown sweaters, was the advisability of light and colorful clothing.

He was very interested in the Commune and recalled things he had seen when he visited it in 1928. He recognized all the delegates, though of course he didn't know me.

When he came to me the Pioneers told him who I was. I told how I had come to be under the protection of the U.S.S.R. I then showed him the copies of the *Daily Worker* with the stories and pictures of the Scottsboro Boys. Gorky was deeply shocked by the case and when I was in the Crimea a month later, I read in the press the urgent appeal he made in behalf of the Negro lads.

"Uncle" Gorky, as the Pioneers often call him, also spoke to us about literature, and urged us to write to the press and book publishers demanding that they issue more and better children's books.

Summer was drawing near, schools were already closing for the summer vacation, when one sunny day in June I found myself southbound on my way to Artek, where I was to remain till the end of the summer.

A forty-five minute ride by ferry on the blue sea took me to Gurzuf, an old Tartar village not far from Artek, which is near Yalta where we had stopped on our way from Odessa.

On the road I met two comrades from Artek who accompanied me there. One of them was so sunburned I envied him. The sun was sweltering and the blue sea tempting. So I took off my top shirt and exposed myself to the sun. In Artek everyone was out on the long wide beach, taking a sun-bath.

Artek is on the shores of the Black Sea and is so hedged in by mountains that one sees nothing but them and the blue sky. To the left of the camp is *Ai-Youdag*, which in Tartar means "Bear Mountain", and further on is the highest Crimean peak on the shores of the Black Sea, *Ramankosh*, which means, if I'm not mistaken, "Big Mountain". It is a beautiful place. But apart from its beauty Artek is known the world over for its Pioneer camp. There are a lot of

Pioneer camps in the Soviet Union. But Artek differs from all other camps and has a special meaning.

Artek is the all-Union resort for those Pioneers who are the most active in their organization and are the best shock brigaders in their studies. There are usually about six hundred of them there at a time. They come from every corner of the Soviet Union, from Moscow, Leningrad, Kharkov, Jews from Odessa, Tartars from Kazan and the Crimea, Georgians from Tiflis, Mongols from Tashkent, Turks from Baku. All nationalities and races meet in Artek, live and work together for their thirty-five days' rest period, gaining strength, knowledge and experience. Here children from one place get to know children of other republics and regions, learn about their life and their Pioneer and school organizations. They exchange experiences and thus take home new ideas to their own respective organizations, and they make strong friendships. I still receive letters from Pioneers and leaders who were in Artek when I was there in 1931.

The camp was started in 1925 by Z. P. Soloviev, then the President of the Red Cross of the Soviet Union. He was also Vice-Commissar of Public Health and Chief of the Sanitary and Health Department of the Red Army. An old Bolshevik and a companion of Lenin, he spent many years in Tsarist exile. Soloviev, who died in November, 1928, loved children and devoted much of his time to developing Artek. And the children loved him and to this day cherish his memory. In Artek, on one of the hills overlooking the camp and the sea, a monument has been erected in his honor.

In 1925 children came to Artek in groups of ten and twenty. There were never more than sixty to seventy-five of them there at a time and they slept in tents.

In 1926 six modern, American type dormitories, which house nearly three hundred and fifty Pioneers, were built.

The dormitories are spacious, full of sunshine and fresh air. Between the beds there is a little cupboard in which each Pioneer keeps his tooth brush, tooth powder, soap, pencils, books and other necessities. There is a stool for each Pioneer at the foot of his bed. No luggage is permitted in the dormitories.

Upon arrival the Pioneers strip for a hot bath or shower and are supplied with clean white trunks and white blouses. They get two costumes, one blue and one white. In the morning when the sun is hot they wear the white costume, in the evening they wear the blue one. Every child is supplied with a toothbrush and tooth powder. The first law in the camp is sanitation.

Artek has an excellent staff of medical workers, organizers and Pioneer leaders who work together, doing all in their power to make the children stronger, healthier and happy.

It is the policy of the Central Pioneer Bureau of the Soviet Union to do everything possible to make the Pioneer organization more colorful, interesting and bright. They call for more sport, more life. This is one of the central tasks in the Pioneer movement here and abroad. Enough of conferences, meetings, sessions, conversations, reports and speeches. Away with all this dry and wearisome procedure in the Pioneer organization—this is the order of our Communist Party. It is necessary to show more interest in children's problems, to find new forms of work with the children—this is the instruction of the Party to the Young Communist League, to the Central Bureau of the Pioneers, to all concerned with the development of the children's Communist movement.

To fill the cultural needs of the camp a Children's Technical Station has been set up where the children do bench

work, wood work, make airplane models, airships and air balloons. There are clubs for radio, photography, literature, drawing and painting. The children have their own kitchen band, movies and campfires. Everyone has a good time and no one ever wants to go home.

Artek sets the example in this. The camp has its own Pat and Patoshon (the Soviet Mutt and Jeff) and its own clowns. There is an excellent library, with an open-air reading room, and a huge balcony, where tables are spread with the latest magazines and newspapers. Pioneer papers arrive from all parts of the Soviet Union. The children also have an excellent museum with all sorts of natural specimens found on the southern shores of Crimea. They have a miniature zoo with rabbits, snakes, crabs, porcupines, lizards, butterflies and such pets as the Pioneers themselves catch.

So far, I have spent my vacation every year in Artek. I loved the place from the very moment I set foot on it. I love to be with those Pioneers who come from all ends of the Soviet Union, children of every creed, race and color, every kind of personality.

The rest home for leaders is a resort for Pioneer workers from all parts of the Soviet Union. Fifty youths, ranging from seventeen to about twenty-three years of age, come here every month to rest after working all the year with the Pioneers.

All Pioneer leaders are Comsomols. Here the leaders exchange experiences, and attend lectures.

The leaders also help out in the vineyards. Artek has a collective farm under its supervision. This farm has hundreds of acres of vineyards, orchards and gardens, and supplies the camp with all kinds of fruit, apples, pears, cherries, berries and vegetables.

Once in ten days the young Pioneers also go out to help

in the vineyards. They tend the vines and do weeding. When the time comes they help gather the grape harvest. The finest and most delicious grapes grow in the Artek vineyards.

I have since spent three summers in Artek and have resolved each year to go back.

From Artek I went to Sevastopol and then to Zaporozhi, the little city out of Dneprostroy. Zaporozhi was a typical little old Ukrainian settlement. Now it has a combine plant and several large factories. During the sixteenth century the famous Dniepr Cossacks lived in Zaporozhi, and the Dniepr River, with its rapids, served Gogol and Pushkin as a setting for romances. Today one can see here the real romance of Socialist construction. The Dniepr today is a calm and soothing river with huge plants in construction along its banks and not far off in Dneprostroy is the biggest dam and the largest hydro-electric station in the world.

#### WHAT CAN I DO FOR SOCIALISM?

When I returned to Moscow at the end of August, after two months of resting under the Crimean sun, the time had arrived to get to work. For nearly nine months I'd done nothing but travel and rest. To study and to learn Russian were my chief concerns. Where was I to go and what could I do? Where was I likely to fit in best in the ranks of the struggle for socialism?

When I arrived in the Soviet Union the comrades had advised me to go into a factory school. At first I wasn't so certain, but now I agreed with them. I decided that to be of real use to the movement I must first have a worker's training, must work at a machine, must live with the workers, must become active in the life of the organizations. If I were in America or any other capitalist country my days of study

would have now been ended, and probably I would be on the soup lines, along with the millions of other unemployed. But here in the Soviet Union I had all my life to study and every opportunity before me. So I decided to go to a factory school.

Having been advised to go into heavy industry, I chose "Amo", the big Moscow automobile plant, which has one of the best factory schools in the U.S.S.R.

## PART II.

### I BEGIN TO LEARN

When I entered the factory school I was already over 17; so living any longer in the Pioneer Commune was out of the question. I had outgrown the Commune and now had to find a new place to live. As a matter of fact the publicity I received as a kid had somewhat spoiled me and I took too much personal credit for my experiences and for the honors I received.

In the Soviet Union, where true collectivism is the basis of all relationships, such individualism is out of place. The alert Russians noticed my failing immediately and pointed it out to me without hesitation. One of the Pioneer publications even mentioned it in an article. At first I was offended, embarrassed and very much ashamed of that article. I couldn't understand this criticism and took it as some kind of mud-slinging. But it started me thinking, and I gradually realized that my critics were right.

And it was to master this defect that I went to live in the Comsomol Commune, among the young factory workers.

The Comsomol Commune I decided to live in is located on the outskirts of Moscow, in a new industrial district, with metallurgical, ball bearing, dynamo and electrical construction, bicycle and automobile factories in the neighborhood. The Commune was established by the district Comsomol organization for the best shock brigaders and most active youth.

We were young people in the Commune and tried all kinds of experiments in planning our daily life. When I entered, the life was entirely communal, that is, everything was held in common. All the money that the members of the Commune earned, no matter what the amount, was pooled.

The pooling idea was all right, but premature for the present stage of development. In the factory every worker was being encouraged to raise the quality and quantity of his output. And workers who did better work were entitled to receive more. But in the Commune a comrade paying two or three hundred rubles into the common treasury received just as much in return as one who handed in a hundred. As a result there was a tendency among some to take it easy rather than work harder. Therefore, in June, 1931, when Stalin delivered his historic speech on "New Conditions—New Tasks" and gave the proletariat of the Soviet Union the six points of victory, our Commune realized that, for the time being, the 100 per cent policy must be changed and adapted to the new conditions which faced the country. Many debates took place as to the form the Commune should take. In the end it was decided to run it on a proportional basis, each member paying into the Commune according to his earnings. Those earning below a hundred rubles paid in twenty-five; those receiving between a hundred and fifty and a hundred and eighty, paid in fifty rubles; those earning above a hundred and eighty, paid in sixty rubles, which was the maximum. This system gave the individual member of the Commune a chance to improve his lot. It encouraged him to work better and earn more, helped him to clothe himself better and raise his cultural level. On this basis the Commune is run today.

In the Commune we are all young, full of energy and wide awake on world events. When we come home from work or meetings we always gather in the living room and start a discussion on current topics—the rise of Hitler to power with the support of the social-democrats, the Austro-German conflict, the projected expansion of the Stalin Auto Plant and its future output of 50,000 heavy trucks a year, the tenth anniversary of the Young Communist League of

the Soviet Union, and any other news in the literature, radio, theatre, sport and film world. Of course, I don't want to suggest that the Commune is merely a debating circle. Far from it. We develop along with the evolving stages of our industrial, economic and social life, in which strong, healthy-minded young people learn to be leaders of our new era of socialism.

We have our own well-stocked library of political and historical literature, fiction and poetry, we have musical instruments and go to the theatres in groups. Further, we all work in leading plants in the city and every one of us takes part in the cultural life of these plants.

There are all sorts of personalities in a Commune and it is necessary for a member to live and work like a comrade with his fellow Communards. Without unity and comradeship, failure must result. That situation arose in our Commune and led to its temporary collapse.

Many different types of people were in the Commune. Some, who had very little in common with collective life, joined the Commune simply because they needed living quarters. Things began to go badly. These newcomers did not pay their monthly dues punctually or take sufficient interest in the collective. They followed their own inclinations. Absurd fights arose over trivialities. People began to lock their rooms and to distrust one another. The spirit of the Commune seemed destroyed; people remained just for the sake of living quarters. The struggle with the bad elements for the life of the Commune ended when the district committee of the Comsomol came to our assistance and helped us clean out the undesirables. Since then the life of the Commune, whose name, by the way, has been changed to "First District Comsomol Collective", has been rejuvenated and things are different. There is a bright future before the

collective. Now all of us in the Commune are living in harmony, fashioning a new mode of socialist living in our proletarian fatherland.

In September, 1931, I entered the factory school.

Many people think a factory school in the Soviet Union is the same as any industrial or trade school in England or America. But a factory school in the Soviet Union means more than simply teaching boys and girls how to work on a machine or in a foundry. The object of the school is to train the new socialist citizen, to see that he is culturally, politically and technically developed. The student receives an all-around education. Mathematics, metallurgical technology, biology, chemistry, physics, mechanics, drafting, military and social sciences are some of the subjects which are taken up in the two-year course of the school. After receiving this education, the youth enters the plant not merely as another "hand". He is literate, skilled, politically and technically developed, ready to serve his factory, his Party and his class.

In September the factory school wasn't finished. The construction debris still lay around, the floors and staircases were incomplete. There was no running water in the toilets and no steam heat had been installed. Then the administration, with the trade union and Comsomol organizations, decided to complete the construction with the help of the students. *Subbotniks* were organized, permanent brigades were got together to carry off the debris, to carry tiles for the floors and toilets, to clean up the place and start running the school and shop as soon as possible. I took part in all those labor groups and was made a brigade leader. None of us will ever forget those early days of our school life. Those groups, besides aiding the completion of the school, helped us make friends and get used to one another. On these groups I met Boris Korobashkin, who was to remain

my foremost friend and comrade for the rest of my factory school days. Bobka (as I call him) was in America four years and had mastered English. During the first year in the factory school we were in the same group. He became my translator during the first year of our studies.

On these *subbotniks* I had my first lessons in socialist competition. Here I started living in earnest with my Russian comrades and being broken in by them. I experienced the true collective force and power of Russian youth, as against the individual-mindedness of youth in America. Here I saw the difference between the healthy relations of boys and girls in the Soviet Union and the relations of the sexes abroad. Abroad boys are taught to regard girls not as their comrades, friends and equals, but merely as girls. At these *subbotniks* I saw smiling girls beat their boy comrades at socialist competition in carrying off debris, in loading trucks and wagons. Merrily and with enthusiasm they did disagreeable and heavy manual labor. And every one knew that by helping to get our school ready, we were building socialism just as surely as the workers at Dneprostroy and Magnitogorsk.

There were many hardships. Towards the close of September, the school rooms were ready for us to start work, but we couldn't get very far. Cold weather set in and the heating system wasn't yet finished. We made several attempts but we were unable to begin regular lessons until November. By the fourteenth anniversary of the October Revolution, our factory school had been finished and we marched past the Lenin Mausoleum on the Red Square with our banners of victory.

#### SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONS

All the activities of our daily life are under the leadership of the Communist Party. The Party nucleus in the school

—consisting of teachers, instructors, pupils in the shops, workers employed in the school and shop, school officials and so on—directs and leads all the work of the school. It checks up on academic programs, on industrial plans and methods of training students. It overlooks no detail. The Party works with the Comsomol, trade union and social organizations in the school. In all our campaigns and mass work, experienced Party comrades are assigned to give help and advice to the young Comsomols. Every Comsomol nucleus has an experienced Party member, whose main task is his work with the nucleus. The Party supplies the Comsomol units with propagandists whose duty is to lead political study circles once a week on such subjects as the history of the Party, historical materialism and current politics. Here the best Party comrades are entrusted with the training of future Communist Party members.

One form of direct guidance from the Party is the practice of calling on the Comsomol organization and the leading comrades to account for their activities to the Party bureau. At the Party bureau discussion follows these reports and decisions are made with suggestions and recommendations for future work. This guidance helps the Comsomols accomplish their tasks and trains them to be worthy first rank helpers and supporters of our great Bolshevik Party.

The Comsomol organization is the backbone of the school. The Comsomol carries through all Party directives, organizes the fight to improve studying; looks after the material and cultural needs of the youth; and their leisure pastimes and forms political circles, military circles, technical circles, directs and gives guidance to the trade union and social organization in the school. In the factory school there are Comsomol nuclei which have five, six and at the maximum seven groups in them. The number of Comsomols in these nuclei averages

around one hundred and fifty members. At the top of all the nuclei is the Base Bureau. The Comsomols elected to the Base Bureau are usually the most active and best developed shock brigaders in the school. The school organization, as part of the factory Comsomol of between five and six thousand members, receives its directives from the factory committee of the Young Communist League.

During my factory school days I was active in the Comsomol and trade union organization and worked on many committees. I learned lots of things in my school activities. For one, I found out how our Soviet organizations conduct mass work. When I remember methods of work abroad in the American Young Communist League it makes me yearn to be back in the struggle there to show them all the forms of mass work that the genius of our Party and Comsomol have worked out here in the Soviet Union.

Some people think that we Communists frown on individual well-being. They picture socialism as a gray, dull affair with everybody dressing and living according to standard. This absurd conception which arises mostly among the privileged classes, who are incapable of conceiving a colorful and intensely interesting life for the great masses, is best answered by the words of Comrade Kosarev at the Seventh Conference of the Young Communist League of the Soviet Union:

"We are not grey, bored people, attired in a standard uniform. Every one of us has his individuality which expresses itself in our Bolshevik character and is attuned to our socialist construction. For this reason we are not opposed to flowers or beautiful clothes. We are not ascetics and do not preach asceticism. We are for a full, rich, beautiful life."

Such a conception is the driving force of all our cultural work in the factory school and of the Soviet school system at a whole.

Our factory school is a huge four-story building of red brick, alive with sunshine from many windows. Two palm trees stand beside the two busts of Lenin and Stalin. The black and red boards against the walls tell you of the competition that's going on in the school for the red banner of the Central Committee of the Comsomol. The black boards tell you plainly about the laggards of our struggle, those who hinder the progress of the school and, of course, of themselves. The red boards tell you of the best shock brigaders in the school. As you mount the stairs you see and feel the struggle for culture all about you, the inscriptions on the walls calling for orderliness and wholesome habits, the socialist competition corners of the Comsomol nucleus, of the International Labor Defense, Society of Aviation and Chemical Defense, and so forth.

The school has a big auditorium with a motion picture booth built into the back wall. After school hours there is always something or other going on in the auditorium, a school conference or a concert. There is also a spacious reading room. The school library has some thousands of books.

The school is equipped with radio and each morning all the students line up in the wide long corridors to take their daily ten minutes of physical drill from the loudspeaker. After that another ten-minute broadcast of current events gives everybody a good send-off for the day.

Besides radio we have a motion picture apparatus. Every subject taught has a film of its own where students may see illustrations of what they are learning—chemistry, technology, metallurgy, military and social science. I well remember the



first time I went for a movie lesson in social science. I knew little Russian and could only understand about half of the teacher's lecture. It was on "Two worlds—two systems", a subject I very much wanted to hear about. Noticing that I sat rather forlornly, without reacting to the lesson, the teacher came over to me and said: "Next time we'll have a movie on this subject and you'll be able to catch up on what you miss now".

The next time we went to the social science class we found all the windows covered with black curtains. The film was called "Today". It was excellent. It showed members of the bourgeois class riding around in automobiles, going to cabarets, speakeasies. It showed their preparations for war and the unemployed workers thrown out on the streets. It gave pictures of the exploitation of the colonial peoples in Latin and South America and in Africa. Then they projected on the screen action in the class struggle strikes and demonstrations and I saw the New York demonstration of March 6, 1930, and recognized many comrades I knew, Foster, Bob Minor, Engdahl, Jessie Taft's father. . . .

The physical culture hall is a splendid gymnasium, with ponies, rails, bars, basket and volley ball courts and all the necessary equipment to help make us strong and fit. After gym anyone who wishes can take a hot or cold shower.

In the school shop we have a Red Corner, decorated with palm trees and pictures. Here there is another library and tables for checkers, dominoes, chess and other games.

#### SOCIAL LIFE

All cultural activities are supervised by the cultural political council. The council includes representatives from the Party, Comsomol and trade unions.

The mass section organizes mass cultural activities, such

as excursions to the villages, special evenings, concerts, sports.

Then there is the section for collective outings to theatres and movies, which, with the help of the factory and factory school organizations, procures blocks of seats in the theatres and movie houses for the students at reduced prices. It was during my factory school days that I first began to enjoy the theatre and opera, though the first time I went to the opera I walked out in the middle. Often moving pictures are shown in the school auditorium, after which debates follow on the merits or shortcomings of the film. There is another section that organizes excursions to the Moscow museums and exhibitions. A leading part in our cultural work is played by the *Tram*—the theatre of working youth which includes some of the most talented students in school. The *Theatre* puts on playlets which portray school life, the class struggle abroad, the struggle in the factory for carrying through our industrial plans, the struggle in the village against the kulaks. Besides that they organize concerts and entertainments and are always on hand with the accordion to arrange mass dancing, singing and playing during recesses. When one sees the members of the *Theatre* he can't but feel the gay life of new Russia. The *Theatre* members have their own uniform, a flaming red shirt that matches their life and vigor and enthusiasm. The *Theatre* has organized circles for acrobatics, a photo and lantern slide group, a mandolin and pot and pan (noise) orchestra.

The youth in the school, especially those in the final year, are all passing from adolescence into young manhood and womanhood. They come out mature and ready to play their vigorous part in life.

The old dirt inherited from tsarist days has not yet been cleaned up completely. Some drinking and degeneracy still remains and takes the form of whoopee parties. But the

Comsomols are unrelenting with those who indulge in these anti-social activities. To counteract such affairs, the Party, Comsomol and trade union organization lay aside large sums for organizing evenings in the school or at comrades' houses for groups. Any group that wishes to arrange an evening is given every assistance.

I have been at many of these group evenings. At such gatherings one finds both students and teachers, singing, joking, playing and dancing until past midnight. They sing revolutionary and other songs and are completely happy without vodka or other forms of alcohol. These parties go through in a lively, cheerful and colorful manner, assisted by the Young Workers' Theatre and its talented actors.

No less interesting are the evenings arranged by the social organizations. During the two years I was in the factory school, I went to many of them, in particular to a Red Army evening organized by the Society of Aviation and Chemical Defense. I also went to the Paris Commune Anniversary and to the reception evenings for Ada Wright (mother of Roy and Andy Wright, two of the Scottsboro boys); for the late Sen Katayama (the old revolutionist, a founder of the Japanese Communist Party); with Vera Figner, who spent twenty years in a tsarist dungeon—the Schlussburg Fortress—all were organized by our International Labor Defense. An evening with Professor O. J. Schmidt, who told us of the exploits of the *Siberyako* expedition to the Arctic, which he led last summer, was organized by the Society for Proletarian Tours and Excursions. The literary circle put on a splendid evening in honor of the seventieth birthday of the proletarian Communist writer, Serafimovich. All these evenings train the youth to a better understanding of class solidarity, besides giving them a good time.

All the sectional organizations in the school co-operate in

the arrangements. The trade union supplies the necessary funds while the organization in charge of the evening mobilizes its members who are personally responsible for carrying through their special assignments. For instance, there's Vanya, who must secure the auditorium for the evening. Vanya also has charge of the concert and entertainment. First he discusses with the comrades what kind of entertainment there shall be. Do we need a movie? Do we need the Young Workers' Theatre? Do we want lantern slides? Maybe we can get professional artists? Whatever is agreed on, he arranges. Next Vera is responsible for the decorations. If she wants red cloth she consults other comrades and then decides whether she really needs cloth and whether the slogan she wants to use can be done on paper. Vera gets a couple of comrades who can draw or paint, gives them supplies and puts them to work. Lesha, in charge of the whole evening, must check up on Vanya, Vera and the rest; he checks up on the concert and receives a written program from Vasya, the musical director; he secures the speakers and finally he looks over all the details necessary to put the evening over successfully.

#### HOW STUDENTS FARE

To assist our students in their personal problems, we have the Social and Material Aid Section of the trade union in the factory school. The students come from cities and villages, many are from children's homes and Communes. Some have no place to live and may be without friends to help them. The factory school aids them. At present there are 553 boys and girls receiving aid. Over 62 of them have been given living quarters in the factory dormitories. In the first half of 1933 nearly 6,000 rubles were spent on furniture, bedding, clothing and boots for students living in the dormitories.

Two hundred and fifty-three students receive 50 per cent reduction in the price of their daily dinners. The average price for a dinner in the factory is one ruble and thirty kopeks. There's a special dinner for students at seventy-five kopeks; those allowed the reduction pay only forty kopeks. The remaining thirty-five kopeks are paid by the trade union. There are also rationed meals, that is, those workers in the factory who eat in the factory kitchen turn in their food cards and if they earn over one hundred and fifty rubles a month they pay eighty-four rubles a month for their three meals daily; if they earn less than one hundred and fifty rubles they pay only forty-eight rubles. Students living in our dormitories who go on this rationed meal system pay over twenty-four rubles a month. The advantage is so great that all the students who find it convenient go over to the rationed system.

When there was a break in the Commune and I stopped eating there I went over to rationed meals and for three months, until the reorganization of the collective, I ate in the factory kitchen. For breakfast we ate potatoes, bread, salami and tea. For dinner, soup or cabbage soup with meat, meat balls with potatoes, beets, cabbage, and cake for dessert. For supper, soup, potatoes with meat, tea and bread.

This summer the Social and Material Aid Section distributed 478 passes for rest homes to students. Every pass entitled the holder to two weeks in a rest home free of charge. In addition four students were sent to a resort, 16 to a sanatorium and 72 took part in a tour of the Caucasus. Three more were sent to the Caucasus to rest, another three to North Caucasus, 25 people went to a camp and 157 received one-day passes to rest homes. The total enjoying vacations with factory training school passes was 758. Besides these passes, seven thousand rubles were given for expenses for the Caucasus tour and for prizes awarded to the best shock brigadiers in

the form of free trips to newly constructed industrial giants of the First Five-Year Plan.

At present a huge red brick house is being built at top speed, for the factory school, to accommodate 200 students, teachers and all the necessary working apparatus.

What has been done and is being done in our factory proves Kosarev's statement that we are realizing the aims of the Leninist Comsomols to work efficiently and rise to a cultural life.

Compare this school with schools in America. What news does the daily paper bring us from the United States? Schools closed by hundreds, teachers unpaid and striking for back pay, cuts in educational appropriations.

According to reports of the National Education Association Joint Commission on the Emergency in Education, April 15, 1933:

"By February 20, 1933, 1,253 schools were closed in nine states . . . carrying complete denial of educational opportunities after that date to 11,969 children.

"Since February 28, other schools have closed. . . . If the Georgia figures are added to those just now given we have an actual recorded total of 2,571 schools, involving 290,000 children as of April 1, 1933."

And children's health is suffering because of the crisis. The U. S. Children's Bureau reports that even in the spring of 1933 about one-fifth of pre-school and school children were suffering from starvation, bad housing, and lack of medical care. (*New York Times*, November 26, 1933.)

These facts are in striking contrast to the development of Soviet education. The socialist society is sweeping away forever one of the scourges of tsarism—illiteracy. Illiteracy has been reduced from 70 per cent in 1913 to less than 10 per cent in 1933.

More than 80,000,000—half the population—attend Soviet schools. They are taught by 1,300,000 educational workers. From 1927 to 1932, under the impetus of mass culture and education due to the Five-Year Plan, the number of children in kindergartens and pre-schools increased 14 times.

We say: "Today we have 1,650,000 children in the factory schools and within two years we'll have nearly 5,000,000 studying there!" Can any other country in the world say that?

Our victories in education are due to the policy of our great Bolshevik Party, and the support of the toiling masses in the Soviet Union. Here we are building a new morality, new ethics, new relations between people and society.

#### EDUCATION IN THE FACTORY SCHOOLS

When a newcomer enters the school he is assigned to a study group, according to his physical and mental rating. When I first entered school I was put in the 28th group, a very strong group. But as I didn't know Russian, I couldn't possibly keep up. I was therefore transferred to the 26th group, a middle group. The difference between these groups is in the pace of work. The strong groups cover more theoretical and practical training. They are usually best prepared for the university. The middle groups have almost the same program but more time is given to mastering theoretical studies. The programs of the lower groups are still further revised and their work is much slower.

During our two-year course we receive a stipend which increases every few months as we improve our qualifications. At the beginning of our studies we receive twenty-eight rubles and ninety kopeks a month; at the end of the second year we earn seventy-two rubles and fifty kopeks a month. This

sum may seem small but we must not forget that the student is actually being paid to study, apart from the privileges and reductions in his cost of living. Imagine a capitalist government spending millions on the upkeep of such an educational institution and at the same time paying its students to study!

I have been in American schools, both the "free" and "reform" schools. Here the teachers who are hired by the capitalist class must teach what they're told, even though some of them disagree with it, and the children have no say in the matter. Discipline is enforced by corporal punishment and the report card system. What a difference I experienced when I entered the Soviet factory school! Here I was my own boss. We have self-government, our own trade union organization and the Comsomol leading the whole school life.

Here I call the teacher by his or her first name, or just "Comrade". Here I make friends with teachers, speak to them about everything, sit next to them in the movies and theatres, dance with them at our group evenings, argue with them, study with them after school hours and have full liberty to criticize them at our meetings if I think they deserve criticism. Here I have affectionate respect for my teachers; they are my friends. They talk over with us their program of lessons for the month and we can raise objections and suggest changes. It's because of the frank and friendly relations between pupils and teachers that we are able to register such high educational successes. Here we have a 100 per cent conscious, working discipline.

We work and study by the methods of socialist competition. The Comsomol organization, with its 1,250 members in the ten nuclei, directs all the socialist competition. Every one of the 1,400 students in the school is somehow affected by the socialist competition. The school entered the socialist competition for the best factory school in the Soviet Union;

it made socialist competition agreements with the Ball Bearing Plant of Moscow and the Andre Marty Ship Building Factory at Nikolaev. Every group in the school had competition agreements with some other group. Within the group the brigades carry on socialist competition among themselves. Our socialist competition developed so much that nearly all the students entered socialist competitions with each other. At the end of the June, 1933, term, we had 1,375 students participating in competition, of whom 1,332 had individual socialist competition agreements. Of that number 223 were shock brigaders. The number of shock brigaders is small compared with the total taking part in our socialist competition. The reason is that when we chose our brigaders we were very severe, demanding 100 per cent in all subjects and no more than 0.3 per cent spoilage in their shop and factory work. A shock brigader must be an example. He must be disciplined and active and carry out whatever social work he undertakes. Perhaps we were too severe, as there were many who approached the high requirements and might well have been selected.

There wasn't a corner in the school that didn't reflect socialist competition. The walls were alive with red and black boards, pictures, slogans, caricatures of the best and worst students, daily reports on what was happening in every group. Every Comsomol nucleus had its corner, the secretary being responsible for daily posting of the progress reports. "Let the whole school know who's fighting for the Red Banner in the school; who wants our school to come out first in the all-union competition; and who is disrupting our work!"—this was the slogan of the whole student body.

The struggle between groups and individuals was intensely interesting, the aim being to get the better of themselves, rather than each other. Students picked parts of their own

lives which they set themselves to improve, to intensify their studies, to raise their cultural level, to produce more for the factory and industry. In Soviet institutions one doesn't challenge a comrade to eclipse him, but to help him. On many occasions strong groups took patronage over weak students. Take the example of the fourth group that undertook patronage over the weak group number two. By the end of the June, 1933, term, the second group was not only able to stand on its own feet but came out as one of the best groups in the school!

In April, 1933, there was a most interesting struggle with "tail" bearers. I took part in it. Every unsatisfactory task or lesson which a pupil hands in (or a task which he fails to complete) is called a tail—a term used against laggards who hang back. There were some students who had 50 and more "tails" to their discredit. I had nearly 40 myself. Well, the Comsomol organization issued the slogan, "Not One 'Tail' by May First!" The school was mobilized in the struggle with the delinquents who had "tails". From the director down, the whole school, teachers, pupils, Party, Comsomol and the trade union, were on the warpath against "tails".

There were daily consultations after school until well on into the evening. The teachers consulted with their students and jogged their memories and reviewed their undone tasks so they might wipe out their "tails".

Whole groups remained behind for these consultations, foregoing movies, theatres, parties, willingly giving their time to clearing up unfinished tasks. Twelve hundred and eleven students attended consultations at least once during that month of April. A great many, of course, went many times.

What were the results? By the end of April over 1,000 "tails" were wiped out. The percentage of the quality in the studies rose from 81 per cent to 95 per cent.

Before the socialist competition and the struggle with the "tails" began the eighth group had a rating of 67 per cent and it rose to 94 per cent by May Day.

In my own case, before the socialist competition I had 34 per cent, 54 per cent and 62 per cent in my studies. I had nearly 40 "tails". I realized that whether I understood Russian fluently or not, I nevertheless had to get out of the rut I was in. By May First I had only nine "tails" left and my rating rose from 75 per cent to 80 per cent. By the middle of June I had a rating of 85 per cent.

Although my rating rose and I began to improve in my studies, nevertheless, I didn't get all that was possible out of the factory school. When I entered it I was very badly prepared through lack of knowledge. The Russian students were way ahead of me. The American schools had given me too little and I was greatly handicapped by my Russian, not being able to understand much of what was being said during the class. I became very pessimistic and doubted whether I should remain in the school. Comrades assured me that I'd catch up and urged me not to quit. I remained, but it was uninteresting sitting through lessons, not doing anything. My friend Bobka knew Russian, but didn't know enough classroom work to keep up with the rest of the group. So we were a pair and became undisciplined. Both of us fell into lazy habits. When the Russian comrades asked us why we fooled around so much, we usually replied that there was nothing else to do. I certainly wasn't yet awake to the new discipline that ruled in the school and was unconscious of my behavior. The Comsomol organization called our attention to it and said that as Comsomols we'd have to get down to serious work.

Instead of studying I busied myself in the Comsomol organization. But I should have done my social work and

studies together. Comrades suggested this and I agreed to have a Russian teacher or to get some good student to help me with my Russian; but I never carried out my part and let myself get up to the neck in social work. My trouble was that I hadn't learned to work by plan and that I was still undisciplined.

Then Bobka and I suddenly realized that besides pulling down our group we were harming ourselves and injuring the building of socialism by not making the most of our opportunities. When we were both transferred to the 26th group we decided to separate. Bobka wanted to remain in the 28th group. As his comrade, I canvassed the opinions of the teachers and pupils and gathered signatures asking the teachers' council and the administration to let Bobka remain in the 28th group. The teachers' council and administration granted our request and I got down to the job of studying seriously.

In the 26th group I was put into a brigade of two girls and another fellow, all Comsomols, two of them excellent students. The brigade system was good because it taught me to work collectively. A good brigade, too, can easily push along a weak student. For me the brigade was wonderful because I was able to copy during examinations. But actually I was learning little and became very dissatisfied with myself.

#### TROUBLED WATERS

Then the Central Committee of the Communist Party decreed the reorganization of the whole Soviet school system. First and foremost the brigade system of working and collectively handing in examinations was stopped; each student had to do his own examination on the basis of his own knowledge. Homework was to be given in case of non-fulfillment of studies. Stronger discipline was introduced and the in-

sistence that school studies be put before all else, including social work.

This decree seemed to have been made especially for me. I found myself compelled to study independently with no translators like Bobka and no brigades to do the work for me. The next few months were difficult. I appealed to the Comsomsols to exempt me from all social work because I was overburdened. After much deliberation they freed me. So I worked independently and things began to move.

I appealed to the teachers' council and the administration to free me from subjects which I considered superfluous in my case, such as biology, Russian literature, English, physical culture, industrial hygiene (a course on how to look after your health while at work) and military science. I wanted to study only mathematics, mechanics, physics, drafting and social science. The free time gained by dropping the "extras" I meant to give to Russian grammar and to the subjects I wanted to study. But the teachers and administration both declined. "What do you mean, you don't need those subjects?" they said. They went over every one of my "unneeded" subjects with me, carefully pointing out that I needed everything except, possibly, English. I refused to be convinced and left them my written request with an exact plan of how I expected to spend my time, calculated to the second. That plan was a wonderful plan, I thought. But they wouldn't accept it and I was very offended. I wouldn't listen to reason and went around with a chip on my shoulder. I was wrong, but just then I refused to admit it. "How will the other students react if we free you from those subjects?" I was asked. "They will say that we're making an exception of you." I replied that the students would realize that my case *was* an exception. . . .

This was unquestionable egotism. I thought I could do as

I pleased irrespective of the others. It betrayed my notion that I, Harry Eisman, former American Pioneer, former League member who sat in American jails, deserved special consideration. "But, oh, no, Comrade Eisman," was the general opinion of the students, "What you were and have done we grant; we are proud to have you among us. But now you're here, a Comsol, you bear the same membership card as we do. You live and work with us, why not really become one of us? Why try to be a law to yourself? If it comes to comparing laurels and deserts, we are not without them ourselves. Only our achievements are on a different front, the tremendous front of socialist construction. No, Comrade Harry, you are utterly wrong and we demand a complete change in you. Be a real Comsol, study and work. If you need help we'll give it to you. But if you won't go in harmony with the collective body and won't listen to us, then we will speak in another tone."

The 26th group, in which I worked, was a very undisciplined one. It was the worst of the six groups in the whole nucleus. We were dragging down the whole nucleus in its fight to win the Red Banner. The Comsol active couldn't function because of students like myself who fooled around and demoralized the group. Because of this the general average rating fell, teachers began to complain to the administration, nearly every day someone was suspended from the classroom for a while. As for myself, I willfully cut out such studies I thought unnecessary.

#### THE CASE OF HARRY EISMAN

Then the Comsol bureau of our nucleus asked to hear a report on what was occurring in our group. The bureau invited the whole active group to attend.

At the bureau the Comsol organizer of the group com-

plained that he had no authority in the group, that no one listened to him, that he had no authority in spite of the fact that all the group but two were Comsomols, and he mentioned some of the disrupters by name. In the discussion which followed I made an extremely wrong analysis of what was occurring in our group. When asked the reason for the fooling around I said we were young people and our behavior was natural. When asked to indicate the ringleaders I shielded them by saying that in our group we were all alike. Then the bureau, seeing that we were protecting one another, challenged me personally. "Do you fool around?" one of the members asked. "Sure I do," I said. At that Misha Mochin, secretary of the Comsomol nucleus, a good personal friend of mine to this day, exclaimed, "Well, let's take up the case of Comrade Eisman; maybe we'll get somewhere." I was soon in troubled waters. Comrades began to criticize me, pointed out my individualism and disruptive activities. I sat there on a table, red as a tomato, with a forced smile on my face, partly angry, partly ashamed and even fearing the possible outcome. But I obstinately refused to budge from my position because I didn't feel that I was altogether wrong. Anyway, the result was bitter for I was to receive a reprimand which was to be registered on my Comsomol record card. That was almost as bad as being expelled from the Comsomol altogether. I took it to heart, feeling that an injustice had been done me, that my friends had betrayed me. Bobka, who by this time had begun serious study and become active in the Comsomols, had even spoken against me, and as for Misha—well, I just didn't consider him my comrade any longer.

"Well . . . here's Harry Eisman," I thought, "the whole world knows him for his good work, millions of children in the Soviet schools are taught to regard him as an example of

international solidarity. What if they knew what has happened to Comrade Harry! Could I ever speak to them again?" Yes, those February days were dark days, it affected me morally and physically. I was able to think of nothing but that reprimand. Somehow, I must try to stop it from being written on my Comsomol record card. I sat and thought and planned. I consulted comrades, even Bobka, even though he was preparing a big speech for a forthcoming meeting of all the nuclei in which he denounced me and justified the bureau decision. And Bobka, despite the speech he was to hurl against me, gave me advice and did his best to help me out.

The first round was fought at my group meeting where the group resolved that the bureau had been too hard on me. The group considered me conscious of my wrongdoing and thought that I should be made an example of and be given a reprimand but not on my record card. That decision improved my feelings a bit.

I prepared for the general meeting, gathering the opinions of the teachers as to my discipline and manner of studying. They were generally more favorable than I expected.

Then came the meeting in the spacious auditorium. The air was tense. Misha announced the first point of the agenda as "the situation in group 26 and the question of Harry Eisman". All heads turned towards me in one of the seats in the back, with smiles of comradely appeal as if to say, "why did you get yourself into such a muddle anyway?"

Misha made a fiery speech, picturing me as the ringleader of disruption, as one who didn't want to study, who didn't respect the collective will, who was a burden in their midst. Bobka next spoke against me, which was a surprise to the meeting, most of those present knowing of my close friendship with Bobka. When Bobka finished he came over and sat next to me. . . .



Actually, Bobka couldn't have done otherwise. He was my friend and he was also a good Comsomol. It was quite right for him to put the cause of the movement above our friendship. Several others spoke against me and several for me, including the secretary of the Comsomol collective of the whole school.

Then I spoke, relating my history and difficulties in the factory school, giving them the opinions of the teachers and finally, admitting my faults.

The vote was in my favor, that is, I should be given only a reprimand. But that was not the end of it.

That bureau meeting and general meeting made me think. I began to see myself as I really was, to realize that I was growing up not as a true Comsomol should. I resolved thenceforth to correct my wrong tendency, to take up my studies seriously and do my utmost to be a real Comsomol.

That meeting did all of us good. After that the 26th group took on new life, new work and strong collective comradeship. It entered socialist competition seriously. We went to consultations collectively, wiped out our "tails", organized evenings with our teachers and administration. The quality of our studies improved and the 26th group was no more spoken of as one of the worst in the school. It became an honest middle group with students who were neither dull nor brilliant. When the diploma work came around in June our group was prepared and no one flunked examinations. The group achieved its goal of 100 per cent in study—and I finished the two-year factory school course with favorable marks on my diploma, being rated "Good".

#### IN THE FACTORY

Our students are to be found in all departments of the factory. In the factory the 670 pupils are becoming real

leaders of factory life. They carry through their plans 98-100 per cent. Many of our students beat the American norm and go over the 100 per cent mark. The automatic screw department, where formerly there were frequent breaks in production and the department's plan was poorly carried through, was pulled out of its rut by our factory school students. Today the department is living up to its plan.

In the departments of the factory our student-workers sign socialist competition agreements with the workers or teachers (foremen) who have the responsibility of making qualified workers out of us. Here is a typical agreement:

Socialist competition agreement between Comrade N., of the stamping and die department, and the Student Worker E., of the stamping and die department of the Stalin Automobile Factory.

I, E., challenge Comrade N. to socialist competition on the following points:

1. Not to be late once or to absent myself from work without a valid reason.
2. To oil and clean my machine daily.
3. To raise my technical knowledge by attending the technical circle.
4. To do my work with more independence (i.e., alone).
5. To keep spoilage down to 0.3 per cent.
6. To see that no damage is done to the machine and no tools are broken.
7. To work a full working day.

We ask from the administration:

1. A working place (this student didn't have his own working place).

2. More technical help from the foreman (teacher).
3. Correct distribution of work.
4. More attention to students.

Signed: Worker—N.; Foreman—K.; Student—E.

An agreement like that, if properly carried out (most of them are) is a real help to the worker, to the student and to the factory. Most of our students make such agreements. Before the competition between students and workers in the factory began there were no such things as personal socialist competition agreements and the patronage of workers over students. By June we had 256 students under the patronage of workers and foremen. Workers who become patrons of students are responsible for the conduct of technical circles whenever feasible among their students. Students stay in the factory until late in the evenings and give up their free days to attend circles and mastering technique, thus carrying out the will of our Party and government.

Besides the 670 students working in the factory there are another 700 working in the school shops, which were started in 1931.

They are called shops, but they are more like complete factories. In these shops you will find lathes, grinders, shapers, automatics, a foundry, a wood-working section, a department for the development of workers' inventions and suggestions and, in general, practically all the equipment that goes with a machine shop or factory.

In the school shops before the socialist competition began the plans were only being fulfilled by 89 per cent, but by June, the end of the term, there was fulfillment of 100-114 per cent. Spoilage amounted to 10 per cent before the competition, but afterwards declined to 4 per cent. The reason for this, I believe, is not the fault of the students so much as

the fault of some of the old machines with which efficient work is often difficult.

In preparation for the spring sowing last year, groups of students and their instructors put out 150,780 rubles' worth of spare parts for the combines, tractors, etc. During that sowing campaign everyone was involved in some way. Students offered to work overtime to put out more parts so that damaged tractors and combines shouldn't stay out of commission long, thus helping the collective farmers to have a better sowing, a better harvest and hence more grain for our Soviet Union.

During the competition the school shops produced tables, chairs, pots, pans, spoons, knives, forks, etc., worth 39,558 rubles. Further, in the second round of socialist competition, piecework was introduced in many groups. The results were overwhelming. Some students earned as high as 150 rubles a month in comparison with the 49 rubles and 90 kopeks which they received at the beginning of the year as their student stipend. Production rose by 27 per cent. This put the shops on a self-supporting basis, abolishing the need for financial aid from the factory.

The success of our students in the factory and in the school shops won high appreciation and praise from the heads of the departments, who appealed to the school administration to graduate students into the factory ahead of scheduled time. Thus, although the graduation of the students into the factory took place officially on June 29, 1933, many students really graduated six months earlier.

By their social and political training our factory school students were practically remade. Many entered the factory school, slovenly ignorant, without discipline and indifferent to the political campaigns of the government and Party. Those who completed the factory school course last June certainly

entered the factory disciplined, technically and politically developed, cultured people. They entered the factory as the most advanced workers in the plant from the social, political and cultural standpoint.

#### GRADUATED

My factory school career ended on June 30, 1933, in the Theatre of the Revolution. On that day we graduated. What a contrast to the time I graduated from public school in New York. Then the bible was read, the rabbi had his say (the graduation couldn't possibly get along without him!), religious and patriotic anthems were sung and at last, after an hour or two of boredom we were given our diplomas.

My New York diploma I keep as a remembrance of the days when, after serving six months in jail, I tried to get into an industrial school or a high school and was turned down as soon as I was discovered to be a Red.

Here, in the Theatre of the Revolution, there was a holiday atmosphere. The theatre blazed with light. Red streamers and slogans flamed everywhere. On the stage sat the director of the plant and the secretaries of the Party and of the Comsomol committees, the school administration, representatives of the Party, Comsomol and trade union organization, representatives from fraternal organizations, from the Red Army and the best shock brigaders. The stories and speeches were full of power, full of life and the spirit of victory. They described the struggle for the remaking of the youth, the struggle for the making of a new man, a new builder of our socialist order, new leaders who can lead the masses on to greater triumphs. Success was ours. Twice we had won the banner in the all-union competition.

We received our diplomas. They weren't merely printed credentials stating that we had finished the two-year course

of study in the Stalin (Amo) auto factory school. They were passes to life.

With the completion of the factory school our lives really began. Many go on studying. Those who wish to become engineers, technicians and specialists, enter the institute. Those who want to be highly skilled workers, go to the machine or bench. Those who have special abilities, or are interested in other sciences find their place in the various institutes and universities of Moscow and the Soviet Union. The road is open and free, we have the choice.

As for myself, the Soviet Union unlocked the gates of knowledge to me. If when I came here I was a little individualistic, very poorly equipped politically, with no knowledge of factory life, or of the actual life of the Soviet workers, today I have been retrained. I have told the story of myself and of my relations with my comrades frankly, because it may influence the development of other workers who come into this new Soviet world. All my old ways of doing and outlook had to be changed. I have overcome some of my shortcomings. The many I still have may pop up as I go along but our Comsomols and Party know how to deal with people like me and will effectually take me in hand as occasion arises.

To be worthy of the Comsomol and of Communism is my aim, to study the great teachings of Marx, Lenin and Stalin and to prepare myself thoroughly for the struggle against capitalism, in which the workers of the world must be triumphant.

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